California Department of Water Resources
Division of Flood Management / Hydrology Branch

California Water Conditions Synopsis for July 2003

Temperatures were much above normal at inland locations during July, and Sacramento tied the all time record for highest average monthly temperature. Over 40 daily high temperature records were set in mid and late July, predominately in southern California. River flows have receded further below average, and statewide reservoir storage dropped at a faster than an average pace.

Precipitation during July was above average statewide, with over an inch of rain falling at several mountain locations. The cumulative statewide precipitation since October remains 110 percent of average compared to 80 percent one year ago.

Snowpack water content decreased to zero at all snow sensors by July 4.

Runoff during July was two thirds of average statewide, with higher percentages in northern California. Cumulative statewide runoff for the water year is 100 percent of average, compared to 75 percent at this time last year. There was a pronounced gradient from above average in the northwest to below average in the remainder of California this year.

Observed April through July runoff was slightly above average statewide, ranging from 139 percent of average inflow to Trinity Lake to 69 percent of average in the Kern River. Water year runoff is on track to total about 100 percent of average overall.

Reservoir storage was 103 percent of average statewide on August 1, 15 percent more than last year. Overall storage is slightly under three quarters of capacity, with higher percentages in some northern California basins.

Long-range weather forecasts remain uncertain. The NWS Climate Prediction Center reports that current atmospheric and oceanic conditions in the tropical Pacific are near average and do not support the development of either La Niña or El Niño in the next few months.